



*The*  
**P***ublic*  
**H***ealth*  
**N***urse*

*and* **YOU**

Public Health Reports

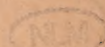
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Bethesda, Maryland







ne day, Margaret McCullough, public health nurse, rang the bell of a neatly kept bungalow. A very young pregnant woman admitted her. This was the nurse's first visit. She explained to Mrs. Nelson that her name had been given the health department by the doctor who had attended Mrs. Nelson's sister, who had died of tuberculosis several weeks before.

"I don't know why he thought we need a nurse," Mrs. Nelson continued in a bewildered tone, after inviting the nurse in. "We're getting along all right. Of course Sara has been a problem since Cora died."

"Sara?"

"That's Cora's girl. They lived with us since Cora got too sick to work. You see, she was used to sleeping with her mother and she's awfully lonesome at night and I can hear her crying. And that makes her cough worse. Lots of days I have to keep her home from school—the child is just too tired to get up in the mornings."

"Is Sara home today?"

"No, she went to school today, she was worried about a history test . . . but she's not very peppy and not much help to me. And I certainly could use a little help in the house, I get so tired these days."

"Why don't you let your doctor examine her?" suggested the nurse.

"My doctor? What do I need a doctor for? I feel pretty good, except for feeling so dragged out most of the time."

The nurse explained the need for careful prenatal care and its advantages to both mother and child. She described the program of the Mothers' Club at the Clinic and Mrs. Nelson was interested.

"I didn't know about needing a doctor. This is my first baby, and of course my mother never had a doctor up in the country. Nobody did, unless they were real sick."

The nurse smiled. "Today, we visit homes in the country, too, when

The nurse admired the freshly laundered ruffled curtains which must have taken hours at the ironing board.

"Oh no, we have only five rooms here, and I like the place to look nice. But I feel pretty slowed down lately."

"That may be because you are not getting the right food," suggested the nurse. "What you eat is very important now. Do you drink plenty of milk?"

The nurse showed Mrs. Nelson a pamphlet which discussed diet for expectant mothers and showed how to get milk into cocoa, custards, and many foods. Mrs. Nelson was asking interested questions when a tall, pale girl walked in.

"Hello, Sara," greeted Mrs. Nelson, "this is the public health nurse who has come to help us."

Sara had nothing to say. She regarded the nurse with polite distrust.

"Isn't that nice?" urged her aunt.

"Yes'm," came flatly from the child as she sank into the chair nearest the door, sighing a little.

The nurse noted Sara's dark circled eyes, and listless manner. She realized that the wan, sickly child was going to be her main responsibility in this family. She planned to make her regular visits on Saturday when she could get to know her better and gain her confidence, so that as quickly as possible Sara would have a chest X-ray which the nurse suspected would be revealing.

Such was one visit in the day of Margaret McCullough, public health nurse.

The next morning she showed Mrs. Ritteri how to give nursing care to her invalid mother and praised 8-year-old Anthony for his regular visits to the dentist.

Down the street she made a follow-up visit to a home where the mother of a new baby was reported to have syphilis. She explained the need for immediate antisypphilis treatment and also instructed the mother to report for her 6 weeks postpartum examination. Miss McCullough spent the rest of the morning helping Mrs. Young give the baby his first bath and showing the new mother many helpful ways to solve the problems of feeding and care of a new baby.

Because she was concerned about Sara, Margaret McCullough de-



public health nurse. She found her in the school health suite helping the doctor check the vision of a group of youngsters. Miss Rhodes assured Margaret McCullough that she would see that Sara's teachers understood the situation, and would not allow Sara to become overtired.

After lunch, the nurse visited Mrs. Goldman whose husband had been suffering from arthritis. This had worried the family very much because Mr. Goldman was finding it difficult to do the strenuous work that was part of his job at the factory. Mrs. Goldman was delighted to report that the public health nurse at the plant had studied the problem and had arranged sheltered work for Mr. Goldman, so that the family was saved from economic distress.

## *What does the Public Health Nurse do?*

**M**ore than 20,000 public health nurses are employed in the United States and territories by local, State, and national agencies. They work for health departments, boards of education, and other official agencies, and for nonofficial organizations such as visiting nurse associations, insurance companies, industries, and tuberculosis associations.\*

The nature of the employing agency restricts some of these nurses to particular health problems or to certain groups of the population. Nurses working with tuberculosis agencies devote themselves to the control of tuberculosis. A nurse employed by a board of education concerns herself chiefly with the health of the school child. An indus-

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\* Current statistics on the number of public health nurses employed by the various types of agencies are available from the United States Public Health Service.

that plant. Most public health nurses, however, are charged with looking after people of all ages from infants to old folks.

The nurse's acceptance in the home, as nurse and teacher of health, gives her rich opportunities to know people and to help them to get well or to stay well. The nurse's first responsibility on every home visit is to do whatever she can to hold the line against disease.

If her agency includes bedside nursing in its service, she renders nursing care to the sick. If her agency provides only instructive nursing services, she helps the family to secure bedside care, or she demonstrates to some relative or attendant the care that the sick person needs, and she returns to supervise such care. One of her main duties toward the sick of the community is to help them secure early medical diagnosis and treatment. She assists the family in carrying out the doctor's orders.

In many homes the nurse finds that mental, emotional, or social problems are a drag on the family's well-being and an obstacle to recovery of the sick. She tries to help solve these problems, and when necessary puts the family in touch with an appropriate source of help in the community.

The public health nurse's role as a teacher of health involves her in a variety of duties that the average person would not commonly associate with nursing. She may arrive on an antepartum visit only to find that the screenless house obliges her to turn her attention also to malaria control. When she assists a family in getting a birth registered, she is in the field of vital statistics. On a communicable disease visit, she may notice the dilapidated condition of the well in the back yard and turn the discussion to sanitation and perhaps initiate a visit by the sanitary inspector.

On the whole, the public health nurse works with and for human beings, to help them improve in health, avoid sickness, and deal effectively with those illnesses or accidents that do befall them.





*Federal*  
 United States Public Health Service  
 Chiefly as Nursing Consultants, teachers,  
 search workers  
 Overseas nurses with international organizations  
 such as UNRRA supplied by Federal agencies  
 Office of Indian Affairs  
 As consultants  
 As staff nurses in Indian health services  
 Children's Bureau  
 Chiefly as consultants



## *State Health Departments*

Administrators and supervisors of public  
 health nursing programs  
 Consultants in such fields as Venereal Dis-  
 ease, Tuberculosis, Crippled Children's  
 Services

# *Who employs the Public Health Nurse?*



## *Local Health Departments*

Administrators and supervisors of nursing  
 General public health nurses who carry on family  
 health service in the home  
 Staff nurses for clinics as Venereal Disease, Prena-  
 tal, Child Care  
 Teachers of Home Nursing classes



## *Boards of Education*

School nurses  
 who supervise  
 health of school  
 children



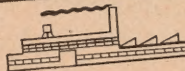
## *Schools of Nursing*

Teachers of the  
 preventive and  
 social aspects of  
 the care of the  
 sick

## *Nonofficial Agencies*



Visiting nurses  
 under such or-  
 ganizations as  
 American Red  
 Cross, Visiting  
 Nurse Associa-  
 tions, insurance  
 companies



## *Industry*

Nurses who give first aid and conduct  
 active programs of health education for  
 workers and their families

# *What are the Qualifications for a Public Health Nurse?*



## **PERSONALITY:**

The public health nurse must be a special sort of person. She must be able to work with people. She must understand people as well as procedures. She is not frustrated by prejudice, poverty, or ignorance. She is a teacher, a case worker, a friend, and a nurse to all kinds of people who are in all kinds of predicaments. She is the kind of person who can help people to help themselves so that they like it.



## **ACADEMIC EDUCATION:**

The public health nurse must be a graduate of an accredited high school. More advanced education is desirable. For many public health nursing positions an academic degree is required.



## **NURSING EDUCATION:**

She must be a graduate of an accredited school of nursing and a registered nurse in the State in which she is employed.



## **PUBLIC HEALTH PREPARATION:**

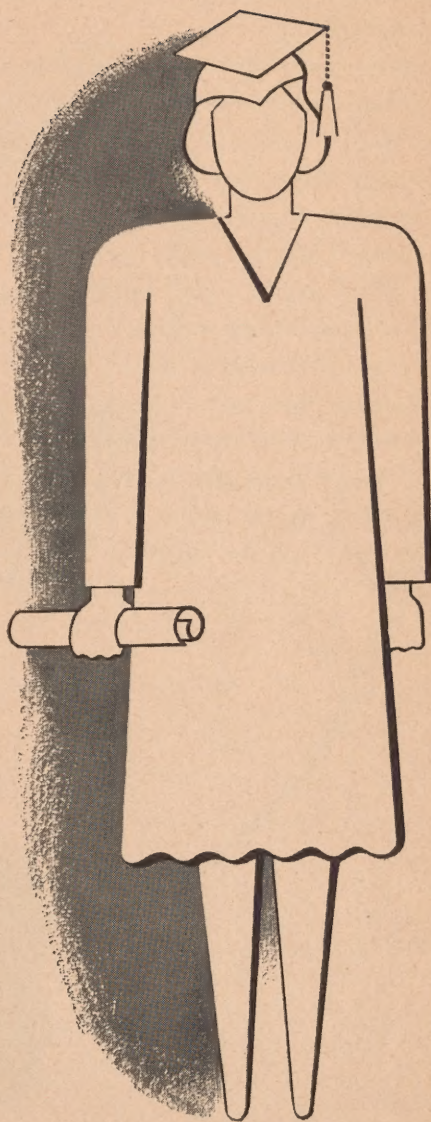
She must have academic preparation in a college or university offering an approved program of study in public health nursing accompanied by supervised field practice. A list of the colleges and universities offering such programs of study may be secured from the National Organization for Public Health Nursing, 1790 Broadway, New York 19, N. Y.



**Q**ualifications established for public health nurses reflect the demands made upon them. Frequently agencies desire the services of nurses who have specialized to some degree in work with crippled children, in maternity care, tuberculosis control, venereal disease control or other public health services.

Higher qualifications for nurses who administer public health nursing programs have evolved as a result of the demands of such administrative positions. A nurse in one of these responsible positions must have a college degree, advanced instruction in public health, and additional field experience.

Scholarships for training in public health nursing are available through funds appropriated by the Federal government.



# *Is there a need for Public Health Nurses?*

fifty thousand more public health nurses are needed to meet the country's requirements of one public health nurse to each 2,000 of the population.

More than three times as many public health nurses as are now employed are needed if standards for nursing care are to be met.

In 1945, several States reported that budgets were ready but public health nurses were not available. According to population, the distribution of public health nurses ranges from 1 nurse to 2,900 in an eastern State to 1 nurse to 18,300 in a southwestern State.

There was no public health nursing of any kind in 909 counties and 9 cities according to the 1945 census of public health nursing. Few areas, either rural or urban, have a sufficient number of public health nurses to meet present needs.

Health departments today recognize that the public health nurse is necessary to translate into practice virtually every type of public health service. As the scope of all health programs expands, additional activities will be added to the responsibilities of the public health nurse.







Every community needs public health nursing service for three basic purposes:

- The prevention and control of disease
- The care of the sick in the home
- Family health counseling

## *Does Public Health Nursing offer Job Security?*

Although requirements and salaries vary, all Federal, most State, many city health departments as well as nonofficial agencies have adopted merit systems. And that means job security.





The range is:

Salary for staff nurses.....  
..... from \$1,600 to  
\$2,300 a year

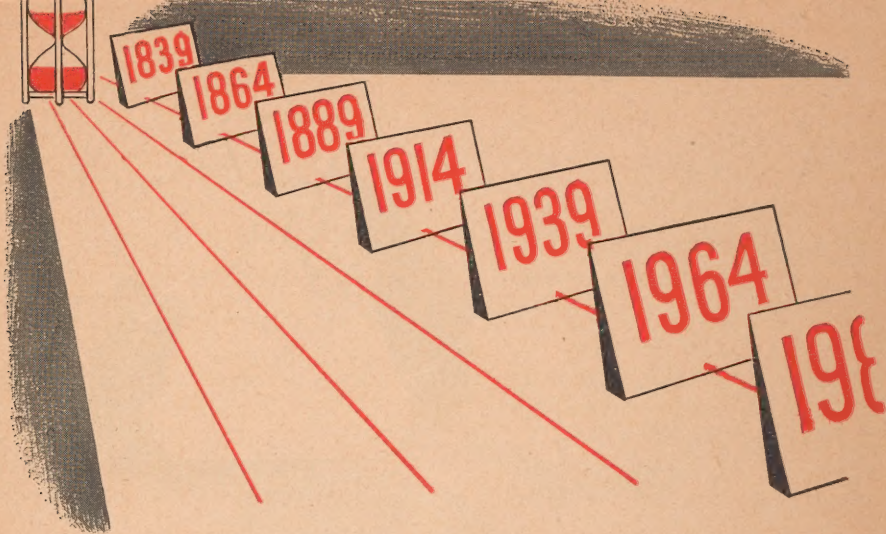
Salary for supervisory and  
administrative positions from  
\$1,800 to \$7,000 a year



## *What is the Future of Public Health Nursing?*

**W**ith the expansion of medical care, public health nursing will have its share of added responsibility and service in any public health program. Science is steadily increasing our ability to control disease, and society is striving in an even greater degree to use science for the benefit and happiness of all the people. The emphasis on preventive medicine places a premium upon the type of service the public health nurse renders.

From 1839, when the first public health nurse in Philadelphia was hired by the Lying-in Charity for Attending Indigent Women in Their



Homes as a result of their plan to "provide, sustain, and cause to be instructed, as far as possible, pious and prudent women as nurses" . . . until 1945 when 50 percent of the personnel employed in official health departments are nurses, public health nursing has advanced tremendously in numbers of personnel and in work accomplished. The public health nurse can look forward to great personal satisfaction from her role in promoting the health security of the nation.





## *The Public Health Nurse*

- GIVES HEALTH GUIDANCE IN THE HOME
- ATTACKS DISEASE AS A FAMILY PROBLEM
- UNDERSTANDS THAT NUTRITION AND MENTAL HEALTH ARE BASIC TO ALL HEALTH PROBLEMS
- SALARIES DIFFER IN VARIOUS PARTS OF THE COUNTRY

Federal Security Agency

U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

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